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New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 10 *(continued)*

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/1)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his report at the 7th plenary meeting, on 21 September.

Mr. Ramaker (Netherlands): In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General does not only provide us with a frank account of the failures and successes of the United Nations in confronting questions of conflict, peace and development; his report is also a catalogue of sensible suggestions to tackle these issues more effectively in the future.

The Secretary-General outlines a vision of how in the future the Organization should deal with the complexities of a community of increasingly independent States. Its centrepiece is his assumption that the United Nations should play a vital role in this global process of change. We could not agree more, and look forward to the proposals the Secretary-General intends to submit in this regard to the Millennium Assembly.

For our part, we are ready to contribute to a strong and effective Organization that can lead us well prepared into the next century.

We welcome the strong case that the Secretary-General makes for focusing international efforts on the prevention of conflict. After all, pursuing the post facto solution of conflicts, which has been the practice so far, is much more costly in terms of both human suffering and material losses.

Such a preventive policy is an ambitious undertaking. It requires a broad approach, integrating political and security instruments with longer-term development and medium-term reconstruction and rehabilitation activities as well as short-term relief emergency assistance.

With the Secretary-General, we believe that the Security Council can play a pivotal role in such a comprehensive strategy. It would require the Council not only to pay systematic attention to the political and military aspects of crises. It would also have to address all those formidable threats to human security beyond naked violence and aggression. Poverty, ethnic tensions and natural disasters equally threaten the human environment as root causes of many conflicts.

In this context, the Secretary-General's reference to the potential of Article 65 of the Charter allowing the Security Council to request information and assistance from the Economic and Social Council is an interesting one and should be pursued or further explored.

The Secretary-General's report is a strong antidote to complacency among Member States with regard to the

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challenges of development. We fully share the Secretary-General's concern that, while a large proportion of humanity still faces miserable living conditions, the flow of aid to developing countries continues to decline. Equally disconcerting is the increasing tendency among donors to earmark aid and ignore the real needs of recipients.

From this rostrum, I can only assure the Secretary-General that my country will stick to its self-imposed aid target of 0.8 per cent of its gross domestic product.

My country firmly believes in the value of multilateral development channels. They, as it were, guarantee a — balanced distribution of aid. We can, therefore, wholeheartedly subscribe to the Secretary-General's claim that the United Nations does have an added value as a truly universal development institution.

Consequently, the Netherlands intends to increase its contribution to multilateral development cooperation. The decision to do this, I freely admit, has also been inspired by the reforms and innovations that the Secretary-General has initiated in the domain of United Nations development activities.

However, we harbour no illusions that even generous aid could be the sole vehicle for social and economic change. On the contrary, the most important contribution in this regard consists of national resources and financial means. In our view, development strategies should primarily focus on maximizing the impact of sound national policies and good governance, leading to sustainable development and favourable conditions for attracting private investment.

In the humanitarian field, we welcome the reorganization of the Secretariat resulting in the establishment of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Under the skilful leadership of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations system is steadily refining and improving its capacity to respond whenever and wherever man-made or natural disasters strike.

Maybe this is the moment and the place to recall the debate a few days ago in the Security Council on protection for humanitarian workers. It is indeed essential that such protection be provided for staff who often have to work in extremely dangerous situations.

It is, of course, no coincidence that during the general debate that took place in his Hall over the previous two weeks almost all heads of State, heads of Government and heads of delegation addressed the issue of globalization. After all, in his report the Secretary-General gave us some compelling reasons to engage in an ongoing discussion on how to deal with this phenomenon, which affects all of us in one way or another.

Indeed, this subject has now been put firmly on the United Nations agenda. It is important that all organs of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, which are at this very moment meeting in Washington, develop a joint approach towards the consequences of this process by sharing information and analyses and by pursuing consistency and complementarity in their policies. The immediate negative consequences — marginalization of social groups and of least developed countries — require our special attention.

The Secretary-General rightly stresses that the promotion of human rights should not be treated as something separate from the Organization's other activities. He qualifies this as a common thread running through all of those activities. We support this view. Fifty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it has become more and more clear that a human rights policy cannot stop at standard-setting and declaratory statements: it must encompass early warning, prevention and remedying of human rights violations. Only an integrated policy in the fields of peace and security, development and human rights can yield results. For that reason, we will continue to contribute to the implementation of this approach, which the Secretary-General has so eloquently outlined in his report.

At the same time, it must be clear that within these integrated policies the international legal system itself has to be accorded its proper weight. We share the optimism of the Secretary-General about the increasing awareness of the need to base the international order on legal norms and rules. The International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague and the International Tribunal for Rwanda have been contributing, within their mandates, to the noble efforts to end a global culture of impunity. We trust that the International Criminal Court in due course will play a similar role.

In our view, the United Nations, in a number of significant ways, is quite on track with the reforms that the Secretary-General initiated last year. Indeed, much has already been achieved, and we agree with the

Secretary-General that the United Nations family is today acting with greater unity of purpose and coherence of effort than it did only a year ago. We are convinced that, given this progress, the United Nations family and Member States alike will support reform as an ongoing process enabling mankind, at any given point in time, to deal effectively with evolving global issues.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the thoughts set out in his report on the work of the Organization during the period of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. We share his vision of the role of the United Nations for the twenty-first century. Ours will be a globalized and interdependent world.

Since the mid-1990s, globalization has been the engine of economic dynamism, of the liberalization of markets, of increased flows of investment and of the communications revolution. Developing countries have carried out profound reforms so that they could be integrated into this new state of affairs. We agree with the Secretary-General that the challenge we face is not to resist globalization, but to take advantage of its positive effects and neutralize its adverse consequences.

Facts show that the economic prosperity of recent years exists side by side with extreme poverty. One fifth of humanity must live on just one dollar a day. Yet the total volume of official development assistance has been constantly decreasing.

Because of its universal nature and its broad economic, social and political mandate, the United Nations has the capacity and legitimacy to propose action that would make it possible for globalization to benefit everyone and to encompass countries and societies that have remained on the fringes of the process. We therefore value the development assistance provided by United Nations funds and programmes to eradicate poverty and to promote social development, sustainable development, good governance and the rights of women.

Institutional reform within the United Nations should make it possible to take action on the new realities engendered by globalization. In our view, that is the central idea of the report of the Secretary-General, and we entirely agree with it. The United Nations must be the voice of the majority, the voice of the smallest and weakest — who in an unregulated world seem to have no agenda that represents their interests.

Among today's global problems, environmental degradation in its various forms requires an urgent response from Governments and from civil society. Argentina understands this challenge and is convinced that isolated actions are inadequate to address global problems such as climate change. We welcome the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and we are proud that from 2 to 13 November Argentina will shall host the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention.

In a globalized, interdependent world, the protection and promotion of human rights is an inseparable element of international peace and security. Extreme poverty and civil conflicts sometimes make us lose sight of individual freedoms. That is why the promotion of human rights must not be viewed in isolation from the other activities of the United Nations, but rather as an element common to all of them, in particular to conflict-prevention and the consolidation of peace and development.

Just as we share the common task of promoting and protecting human rights, we must also take determined action against drug-trafficking and terrorism. The special session of the General Assembly on the drug problem and the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings are concrete examples of joint action to deal with global threats. We also see such joint action in the sphere of humanitarian assistance: since its establishment, the "white helmets" initiative has sought to create awareness in the international community of the need for joint action. It is disgraceful that this spirit of solidarity should be frustrated when needy people are prevented from receiving humanitarian assistance and when there are attacks against international personnel responsible for distributing that assistance.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the irreplaceable role of the United Nations. If that responsibility is not shouldered, no other activities can be carried out effectively. We agree with the Secretary-General that along with conflicts between States, natural disasters, ethnic tension, systematic violations of human rights and grave humanitarian emergencies are all sure sources of instability that can disrupt peace and security throughout a region.

These conflicts require of the Security Council a new sensitivity, which can be produced only by a more direct awareness of the realities of the countries concerned and of the political, social, economic and

humanitarian circumstances where those conflicts are taking place. There is thus a need for greater transparency in the work of the Council, closer contact with the General Assembly and a frank dialogue with the parties to conflicts and with troop-contributing countries. In this connection, we must consider in detail the Secretary-General's proposal to establish cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council on the basis of Article 65 of the Charter.

Disarmament plays a central role in the area of peace and security. We share the Secretary-General's concern regarding recent nuclear tests. At the same time, we view hopefully the declarations made by India and Pakistan with regard to signing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I am pleased to announce that on 24 September our Congress approved that Treaty, which will soon be ratified.

Another positive development is the adoption in Ottawa of the Convention banning anti-personnel mines, which Argentina signed in December 1997.

Argentina also supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a means to achieve the gradual denuclearization of the planet, and resolutely supports the initiative aimed at declaring the southern hemisphere an area free of nuclear weapons.

With regard to the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), plus Bolivia and Chile it is worth mentioning, the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and the Ushuaia Declaration, which establishes a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and which contains a decision to move towards declaring the MERCOSUR region an area free of anti-personnel landmines.

In his annual report the Secretary-General emphasizes the fact that the number of United Nations personnel assigned to peacekeeping operations has decreased since 1990. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we live in a safer world. Peacekeeping structures must always be available for unforeseen deployments. We believe that the lack of financial resources must not restrict this principal mandate of our Organization.

Argentina, which is the eighth largest troop-contributing country and this year is celebrating the fortieth anniversary of its participation in peacekeeping operations, once again renews its commitment to those operations.

In addition, Argentina is part of the Rapid Deployment Brigade and the stand-by arrangements system. It maintains its troops at a high level of training and offers both Argentine and foreign officers courses at its training centre. During his recent visit to Buenos Aires the Secretary-General honoured the centre with his presence.

The system of collective security and the rule of law have been strengthened by the recent creation of the International Criminal Court. We completely agree with the Secretary-General's assessment regarding the importance of civil society in the process of creating that Court. We would like to pay special tribute to the Coalition for an International Criminal Court, which channelled the efforts of hundreds of non-governmental organizations and promoted a permanent and fruitful dialogue with Governments.

The summary which I have just given reflects Argentina's commitment, and that of Latin America, to the United Nations and to the decisions adopted by the General Assembly. That commitment will be strengthened as today's uncertainty in the international arena requires a more energetic and assertive Organization for the achievement of the purposes of the Charter.

Mr. Pawar (India): Permit me to compliment you, Mr. President, on the skill with which you are conducting the work of the fifty-third session.

May I also thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, which is the subject of today's discussion, and compliment him on its quality. I will address myself to only a few of the many themes which he has covered in this report.

We believe that all Member States must work together to strengthen the United Nations, make its functioning more democratic and representative and ensure, through it, that we are able to harness for the common good the forces and energies released by the end of the cold war and by the momentum in global economic interaction. It is only the United Nations that can evolve, define and promote a comprehensive and responsive universalist agenda which will meet the challenges of the next century. The Secretariat obviously has a critical role to play. On the one hand, led with distinction by the Secretary-General, it must in its work faithfully reflect the priorities set by the Member States and transmitted through the intergovernmental mandates; on the other

hand, it is our responsibility to give the Secretariat the resources to do the work that we have assigned it.

We applaud the Secretary-General's vision of the Organization, which places disarmament near the centre of its mission of peace and development. However, we are disappointed that it appears from the report that what preoccupies the United Nations is still non-proliferation and perhaps the reduction of nuclear weapons, not their total elimination. Even now, with the cold war part of history, the international community has been unable to come to grips with the fundamental global problem that more than 35,000 of these weapons are held in the armouries of the nuclear-weapon Powers, with the rest of the world having no say in whether or not they will draw down these stocks and, if so, at what pace.

What India wants, and what the Non-Aligned Movement wants, is not a leisurely reduction of nuclear weapons, accompanied by the upgrading and strategic modernization of arsenals, but their elimination, not in an impossibly distant future, but within a short time frame, informed by a sense of urgency and political commitment. We have stressed from this podium many times the centrality of promoting nuclear disarmament to safeguard our collective future. We do so again. This goal should now be within our grasp. We believe that, in accordance with the principles and priorities of the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, the United Nations has the foremost responsibility to promote nuclear disarmament, and this should be both articulated and pursued among its highest priorities.

As the Secretary General has noted, peacekeeping cannot but continue to be an important area of the work of the United Nations. We agree with the report that cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements whose mandate permit them to play such a role can be useful in peacekeeping operations. However, the United Nations cannot possibly either cede or subcontract its authority in peacekeeping to any lesser body, nor become an instrument for countries or regional organizations to promote agendas which are not those of the general membership.

A word on sanctions. The report welcomes the concept of smart sanctions. However, the record has shown that for many countries eager to impose sanctions, smart sanctions are those which cause the least pain to those who impose them and frequently cause extreme suffering to the often innocent populations of the target countries. We have always said that sanctions are a blunt instrument. They must be used sparingly and after the most careful consideration by the international community.

The report states that the United Nations has "started to embrace a new holistic concept of security" and goes on to say that, following from this, the role of the Security Council should also be broadened. This is a matter that requires very careful consideration. For years, it has been widely recognized that the security of nations, and international peace, has multiple dimensions. This indeed was why, several years ago, the United Nations commissioned studies on the linkages between disarmament and development. But it is a completely different matter to argue therefrom that as a result it is the Security Council that should assume an expanded role. On the contrary, this holistic concept of security can be properly addressed only in a body like the General Assembly, with a universal membership and a general mandate.

We note with interest the reference in the report to the "expression of global people power", which was made manifest in recent multilateral negotiations. The negotiations on the Statute of the International Criminal Court have been referred to as one of these instances, where individuals and groups promoted a common cause "supported by world public opinion". Again, the United Nations should tread with caution. In countries that are home to contain two thirds of the world's population, the negotiations on the International Criminal Court did not raise a ripple; world public opinion was not engaged.

Also, the negotiations themselves were in many ways a travesty. Delegations were subject to enormous pressure from non-State actors; the freedom of Governments to negotiate was constrained, and the discussions less than transparent. At a critical stage in the negotiations, some Member States received unusual interventions from the Secretariat. And requests from States that represent the majority of the world's population were brushed aside because they were not politically convenient to those described as the like-minded. These are developments we would caution against. The Secretariat of the United Nations properly functions in promoting mandates given to it by the general membership and not in anticipating them.

We cannot achieve a durable and just peace unless there is a transformation of a world order which works inexorably against the interests of the poorer countries. The Secretary-General has clearly underlined that the challenge of development remains paramount in this

world, where one fifth of humanity is forced to fend for itself on less than a dollar a day. It is therefore saddening to observe the steady decrease in the importance of the operational activities of the United Nations, with a relatively modest $5.5 billion being made available for development assistance through the United Nations. No real progress has been made to fund United Nations funds and programmes on a secure, predictable, assured and continuous basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of the developing countries.

India is one of the largest contributors to the core resources of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and a significant contributor to those of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). We hope that the developed countries will also increase their contributions to united and apolitical resources for development. At the same time, the reforms undertaken by the United Nations funds and programmes in the context of funding strategies should preserve the essential character of United Nations assistance, which must continue to be neutral, impartial, given as grants and based on the priorities of recipient countries. The United Nations development assistance framework must be approved by recipient Governments to ensure that it corresponds to and reflects national priorities. We commend the excellent work undertaken by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Food Programme. They should continue to focus on their mandates, not divert their scarce resources into activities that are better conducted by other agencies of the United Nations system.

India accords the highest importance to the provision of humanitarian assistance which fully respects the guiding principles laid down by the General Assembly in resolution 46/182. We welcome the streamlining of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the efforts of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to engage the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in proactive and collaborative efforts to deal with a limited number of key issues. We are concerned, however, that the lack of predictable resources for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 60 per cent of whose costs are still funded from extrabudgetary resources, may curtail its effectiveness. As we have said before, reforms cannot succeed in the absence of required resources. We are seriously concerned that the levels of funding for humanitarian assistance have been declining over the last few years, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of programme requirements.

It is clear from the report of the Secretary-General that less than 25 per cent of the requirements of humanitarian assistance were actually made available by mid-July 1998. We therefore strongly support his earlier proposal to conduct a comprehensive review of the funding of humanitarian programmes, including, *inter alia*, the relationship between funding provided for emergencies and resources made available for development programming. We hope that consolidated reports by the Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator on the implications of under-funding, including forced changes in priorities and cancellation of activities, would be an important first step in ensuring that the United Nations can provide adequate assistance to those in need.

We have noted the dilemmas of relief and development linkage outlined in the report. We believe that a comprehensive approach that links relief and development is required to close the relief-to-development gap. The eradication of poverty through sustained socio-economic development offers the best opportunity to break through the vicious circle of underdevelopment, conflict and misery.

There can be no doubt, during this fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that the promotion and protection of these rights constitute one of the core responsibilities of the United Nations in its functions, both in the preservation of international peace and security and in the promotion of development. The emphasis and priority which the Secretary-General places on human rights in the work of the Organization is therefore welcome. However, the report tends to simplify the relationship between human rights and peace and security, as well as development; we would be concerned if the United Nations were to seek solutions and responses that rely excessively on a strengthening only of the legal order in the promotion of human rights.

There can be no doubt that there are situations in which human rights are a major cause of conflict. There can also be no doubt that a body of legal norms, rules and laws is important for the protection of human rights. However, human rights seen only from this perspective become essentially problems of behaviour and discipline, to be rectified by the enforcement of laws, norms and standards. Such an approach, however, ignores or downplays the historical, sociological, ideological and economic circumstances which govern or influence the behaviour.

All fundamental human rights are universal. But the roots of human rights violations may vary and may not always be amenable to legislative and enforcement approaches. For example, situations in which threats to human rights come from outside or beyond the Government, through extreme ideologies — we are aware of the worst instances of this — require a much more multifaceted approach. Similarly, human rights problems that are in reality symptoms of underdevelopment cannot be approached simply from a legal or behaviourist angle. They must be addressed as problems of development.

The United Nations must view all human rights — civil, political, economic, social and cultural — as universal, indivisible, interdependent, interrelated and embedded in the trinity of democracy, development and human rights. The Organization must not, either wittingly or unknowingly, try to promote a partial concept of human rights seen as, or modelled essentially on, civil and political rights and divorced from democracy and development. This could lead to a dichotomy between human rights and development that would be most undesirable. It could raise concerns that the mainstreaming of human rights, especially in the sphere of the United Nations development activities, could displace development from its central role in the work of the United Nations. A comprehensive approach that mainstreams economic, social and cultural rights to development, not only in name but also in deed, is the approach that would be most consistent with the holistic concept of human rights that the United Nations should aim to promote.

The United Nations has a wide charter of responsibilities as it approaches the next millennium. The Secretary-General has proposed initiatives for us to consider, and we look forward to constructive discussion on them. However, as long as the United Nations is hamstrung by its ongoing financial crisis, its scope for action will be severely curtailed.

We trust, therefore, that all Member States will demonstrate their support for the United Nations, which all of us need now more than ever in a globalizing world, and ensure that it is placed on a sound financial footing. A United Nations that is bankrupt or kept in chronic poverty reflects a political bankruptcy and a lack of will to back the institution on which our hopes must rest for our collective future. That is, hopefully, not a message that the Organization wishes to send.

We commit ourselves to supporting the Secretary-General in his continuing efforts to reform the United Nations and make it more responsive to the needs of its Members. We wish him well in his endeavours and assure him of our constructive engagement.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): Over the past several years a quiet revolution, as Secretary-General Annan has noted, has been taking place here at the United Nations. The Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization, which is before us this morning, further illustrates the many ways in which the new culture of reform is taking root throughout the United Nations.

The Secretary-General's strong and impressive leadership for reform is building confidence, both within the Secretariat and among Member States. A strong, institution-wide consensus has emerged for reform. Progress is being made in priority-setting, budget discipline and rationalization of structures and functions in accordance with Assembly mandates. Of course, the proof of the package's success will be in its effective implementation.

Secretary-General Annan took an important first step in the reform effort with the appointment of Louise Frechette as Deputy Secretary-General. This new post ensures that attention to reform and the ongoing strategic management of Member States' interests will continue. Cabinet-style management is also improving United Nations operations.

In order to ensure continued progress, the United Nations will need to focus on the Organization's comparative advantages. The more complex the global environment, the more we need to prioritize and manage what the United Nations can best do with what it has in hand. The United States delegation shares the Secretary-General's view that administration and management must continue to focus on creating a mission-driven and results-oriented Organization.

However, while the Secretary-General's reform package is bearing fruit, there is still significant work remaining. We advocate robust implementation of the points highlighted in the Secretary-General's report. This would include time limits on new programmes and results-based budgeting. These have been authorized by the Assembly since 1987 in its programme planning, budget, monitoring and evaluation rules. Their implementation is long overdue, as is the functioning of the recently agreed dividend-for-development account.

A striking theme in the recently concluded general debate was that of globalization, and indeed we strongly support the efforts of the Secretary-General to adapt this Organization to a globalized society. The strengthening of cooperation and working relations within the United Nations system — between the Organization and the international financial institutions at both Secretariat and intergovernmental levels — is an excellent example. We look forward to further initiatives in this area.

Likewise, the progressive adaptation of United Nations development machinery, both in organization and in philosophy, demonstrates the realization that if development is to be sustainable, it must encompass not only economic growth but also the distribution of the fruits of that growth, investment in human as well as capital infrastructure, good governance and, of course, respect for human rights. As regards adaptation, we have been impressed that the United Nations has undertaken a much needed renewal of its activities in coordinating humanitarian relief over the course of the year.

As the Assembly now considers its many agenda items, we must keep in mind this need — that is, to continue to continue to adapt United Nations work so as to better meet today's international realities. The Organization's interests in this regard will be well served by the Secretary-General's planned report to the Millennium Assembly. Preparing for this important event by reviewing the Organization's priorities will help ensure that the United Nations remains relevant and vibrant for the twenty-first century.

Critical to this is effective oversight. We are pleased with the progress of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Management audits, the announcement of guidelines, in-depth evaluations, anti-fraud work, programme performance reporting, support for institutional reform, and follow-up reviews all show that the Organization is going beyond merely learning lessons to actually applying them. Of course, the support and active participation of staff members in the reform initiatives is critical to their success. In order to empower them more effectively we agree with the report that vital reforms in personnel policy must still be undertaken.

Key to the success of this Organization is the United Nations ability to live within its resources and to use them where the United Nations can best offer unique assistance. Additionally, the United Nations many stakeholders around the world need to see the Secretariat implementing reform in ways in which it can best offer unique assistance.

Finally, and perhaps most important, we agree with the Secretary-General when he notes that

> "Member States must engage those reforms that lie within their purview with greater determination and vigour." *(A/53/1, para. 236)*

My Government believes that this simple truth is the irreducible bottom line to the prospect for sustained and effective reform as admirably advocated by the Secretary-General. So, in that context we stand ready, as we have in the past, to assist the Secretary-General in all his efforts on behalf of Assembly mandates to press for greater efficiency, accountability and results-focused accomplishments.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Let me begin by expressing in the name of my delegation our greatest appreciation for the excellent efforts made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in guiding the work of this Organization most wisely and competently. It is a matter which we indeed have expected since he assumed his post. We in Kuwait wish to reiterate our full support for his efforts to highlight the leading role of the United Nations in the international plane.

My delegation has studied carefully the Secretary-General's report in document A/53/1, which we are considering today. We cannot fail to pay tribute to the manner in which it is couched. It is comprehensive in the way it deals with the issues. It is also characterized by vision in grappling with certain international issues, not to mention courage in stating the shortcomings of the work of the United Nations in certain respects and the reasons for such shortcomings and providing the practical solutions, which is a matter that deserves the appreciation of the Members of the United Nations.

My delegation fully supports the position of the Secretary-General to continue with the reform of the United Nations. Kuwait has always expressed its support of the efforts of the Secretary-General in this respect. It responded to certain measures and suggestions on his part quickly and voluntarily. We agree with him that reform should be a continuous process and not merely a transient action. So we have to support the Secretary-General and ask him to continue his meritorious efforts in the field of reform, especially as regards strengthening the role of the United Nations in the social, economic and development areas. These issues are contained in the report we are considering today.

Furthermore, since Kuwait belongs to the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, it wishes to state its support for all the worthy observations provided by these two groups jointly, especially on the process of reform and in particular the section regarding solving the financial crisis.

The report of the Secretary-General has intensively focused on the efforts of the United Nations to resolve international conflicts, especially those that are rife on the African continent — and in Afghanistan — that have been dealt with objectively and frankly. He has paid tribute to the success of the efforts in defusing the crisis that emerged last February because of the problem between the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and Iraq. He stressed that his role comes within preventive diplomacy, and in this respect we fully agree with him.

However, Kuwait wishes to continue this substantive part and wishes to refer to the efforts of the United Nations and the Secretary-General on the other issues between Kuwait and Iraq — that is, the two issues of the prisoners of war and the return of Kuwaiti properties and possessions that were stolen during the period of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. We believe that there are certain legal and technical reasons that impel us to clarify what has taken place concerning these two issues. For example, the prisoners of war and return of property to Kuwait fall under certain major issues considered at the United Nations — that is, the General Assembly item about the consequences of the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait in 1990, and the Security Council item entitled "The situation between Iraq and Kuwait".

The United Nations is concerned with the follow-up of the above issues, especially that it now has a representative in Iraq who is following up these and other issues. Furthermore, the previous reports of the Secretary-General had referred to the developments of the above two issues.

We in Kuwait call upon the Secretary-General to pay special attention to the two above-mentioned issues, especially regarding the Kuwaiti prisoners of war. This involves tragedy and suffering on the part of thousands of Kuwaitis who are awaiting the return of their innocent relatives. We confirm here that this is one kind of human suffering. According to our understanding, human suffering is one and the same whether it is the suffering of one individual or hundreds of individuals, or whether it was a result of sanctions or a hostage/prisoner-of-war situation and deprivation. It is one and the same suffering that should be dealt with strictly in a human manner and in a way that confirms the credibility of the United Nations in this respect.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our appreciation of the Secretary-General for all his efforts. I wish him success in his efforts aimed at the creation of a new Organization — an Organization capable of confronting the challenges of the next century and of playing a leading and effective role in the international community. This is our heartfelt wish and aspiration, as it is also for the peoples of the world.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization. It is refreshingly concise yet comprehensive in its coverage. It deserves our serious and in-depth discussion and consideration. Our deliberations in this particular debate, under item 10 of the agenda of the General Assembly, will provide the basis for further consideration of specific issues later on. These deliberations should also assist the Secretary-General and his associates and staff in preparing for further work to be done during the current session as well as future sessions of the General Assembly.

We now stand at the threshold of a new millennium. Our consolidated efforts at the United Nations must be directed towards ushering in an era of unprecedented international cooperation and equitable development. Through our continued commitment to the Organization, we should be able to work collectively to establish a global concord that is true to the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

My delegation supports the Secretary-General's plan to submit a report to the Millennium Assembly, in which he proposed to suggest

> "workable objectives and institutional means for the United Nations to meet the challenges of human solidarity in the years ahead". (*A/53/1, para. 3*)

While applauding the Secretary-General's initiative to draw upon diverse views from various levels of society, my delegation wishes to emphasize that preparations for the Millennium Assembly should primarily be an intergovernmental process. It is important that the Secretary-General work closely with Member States through an appropriate mechanism in preparing for the important Assembly. Similarly, Member States should begin to prepare to ensure that the Millennium Assembly

will achieve concrete results rather than be a largely celebratory occasion.

I wish to reiterate my delegation's commitment to the importance of upholding Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, which calls for effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to international peace and security. Too often in the past, inaction and selective actions on the part of the Organization have led to the escalation of conflicts, resulting in unnecessary human and material costs. Too often, badly needed resources have to be spent on post-conflict activities. It is important that preventive efforts be stepped up so that the Organization's priorities can be appropriately ordered. My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts in this regard.

We commend the Secretary-General for his use of the services of prominent and skilled diplomats to serve as his personal representatives. We also support fully the Secretary-General's call for better information-gathering and the improvement of early warning systems to monitor and respond to potential conflicts in order to enable swift and timely action on the part of Member States as well as of the Organization. Strategies have to be well coordinated. Above all, Member States must have the political will and resources to implement such strategies.

We concur with the Secretary-General's assertion that a new holistic concept of security is necessary in further efforts at preventing conflicts. Peace and security are indeed inextricably linked to the promotion of development. The Secretary-General has presented a very important question — basically, that of broadening the role of the Security Council by invoking Article 65 of the Charter. While recognizing the increasing need of the Council to be provided with accurate and relevant information to address economic, social and humanitarian crises that threaten international peace and security, my delegation would like to stress that any action by the Security Council in this regard must be taken with due recognition of the proper role and function of General Assembly. My delegation believes that Member States should examine thoroughly the Secretary-General's comments with a view to studying the various implications.

My delegation is supportive of efforts to further intensify cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in early warning and preventive diplomacy. We recognize that the United Nations cannot act alone on every potential conflict. However, it is important to ensure that this Organization does not absolve itself totally of its central and critical role in the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation strongly believes that preventive diplomacy should be undertaken within the provisions of the United Nations Charter and its expressed mandate. The question of reconciling the legitimate concerns of the international community and respect for the principle of sovereignty, as expressed by many Member States on previous occasions, should also be carefully addressed.

On the issue of peacekeeping, Malaysia wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the important role of the United Nations in peacekeeping efforts. Malaysia is fully supportive of the Organization's initiative to continue to strengthen the United Nations capacity to respond swiftly to conflict situations. Malaysia was among the first of 77 Member States to join the United Nations standby arrangements system. My delegation takes note of the initiative taken by some Member States to establish the Stand-by Forces High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). However, we believe that, since membership of this Brigade is not open to all States Members of the United Nations, it is perhaps not quite appropriate at this stage to refer to it as the United Nations Stand-by Forces High-Readiness Brigade. Indeed, there is a need to clarify how the United Nations intends to deploy this Brigade in the context of the existing United Nations standby arrangements that involve other United Nations Member States.

The subject of sanctions has continued to be of great concern to Member States. My delegation strongly feels that sanctions should be applied with great caution. They should be resorted to only in cases of extreme necessity when other peaceful options provided for in the Charter have been proven inadequate. Sanctions cannot be used as an instrument for promoting the narrow and national interests of individual Member States. Sanctions, when deemed absolutely necessary, should have specific objectives, be clearly targeted and given specified time-frames so as to reduce humanitarian costs.

My delegation notes that some significant progress has been made in the reform process instituted by the Secretary-General. We welcome the continuing efforts aimed at the streamlining of the Secretariat, the reorganization of the work programme into four core areas and other measures aimed at improving the whole United Nations system. We welcome the establishment of the Senior Management Group. Clearly, the implementation of the important measures proposed by the Secretary-General that require the approval of Member States will have to be monitored so as to ensure

a more efficient and effective United Nations, with a renewed emphasis on economic, social and development activities.

My delegation is pleased to note the early preparation for a review conference in the year 2000 to assess the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and for a special session of the General Assembly in June 1999 to follow up on the International Conference on Population and Development. Malaysia will work closely with other Member States and the relevant United Nations organs and bodies to ensure that we all remain committed to the promotion of social development worldwide, particularly in the light of the current economic crisis, which is spreading fast around the world, threatening to further drive millions of the poor and underprivileged towards more extreme levels of poverty and deprivation.

The humanitarian efforts of the United Nations around the world deserve our applause and support. My delegation welcomes the creation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. We also welcome the Organization's initiatives to provide early, efficient and more coordinated response to humanitarian situations and its efforts to improve the delivery of humanitarian services. The question of the security and safety of humanitarian workers in conflict situations is of utmost importance and should be adequately addressed. We note the slight decrease in the number of refugees worldwide in 1997. Nevertheless, we think that serious efforts should be made not only to resolve current refugee problems, but also to prevent future ones.

This year, we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We will also conduct the first review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. We have to take stock of the progress made so far in the field of human rights. There is still evidence of double standards and selectivity being applied in the treatment of human rights. My delegation takes note of the Secretary-General's assessment on human rights and concurs with him that

> "the promotion of human rights must not be treated as something separate from the Organization's other activities". (*ibid., para. 172*)

However, we would like to emphasize that all rights should be treated equally and in a balanced manner. Unfortunately, the implementation of the right to development remains very unsatisfactory. Therefore, a new spirit of cooperation needs to be injected to reinvigorate our collective commitment to all aspects of human rights.

My delegation shares the vision of the Secretary-General that the United Nations should continue to give priority to disarmament issues. Malaysia is particularly pleased with the reestablishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. The Secretary-General has appropriately warned of the danger of nuclear-weapons proliferation and the catastrophic consequences of the use of such weapons. Clearly, international efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation have suffered some serious setbacks recently. Malaysia welcomes the recent announcement made by Pakistan and India that they will sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the near future.

As regards the work of the Conference on Disarmament, my delegation regrets that the Conference has failed yet again to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. My delegation, however, welcomes the establishment of the two committees in the Conference on Disarmament to deal with fissile material cut-off and negative security assurances. We hope that they will make speedy progress in their deliberations.

Serious efforts should be made to strengthen the Protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. The international community should be prepared to conclude negotiations as soon as possible on a balanced protocol for the Convention's verification regime, taking into account the interests of developing countries, particularly related to technology transfer.

The proliferation of small arms is one of the most challenging issues confronting the international community. The illicit trafficking in and widespread use of small arms have the effect of destabilizing societies. My delegation supports the suggested holding of an international conference to increase public awareness on the need to deal with the situation.

The challenge of development remains paramount. Yet the volume of external aid to developing countries has steadily declined throughout this decade. This dilemma that we face as a community of nations is accurately summed up by the Secretary-General when he says

> "Our agenda is expanding, yet our resources are declining." *(A/53/1, para. 121)*

The total development assistance made available by the United Nations is a relatively modest $5.5 billion per year. Nevertheless, we share the Secretary-General's hope regarding the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. My delegation hopes that further efforts will be made to constantly refine the system.

The Secretary-General has spoken in his report about engaging with globalization. In the current context, it is important for all of us to be alert to the numerous challenges and vast opportunities offered by globalization. There are new dimensions of globalization which have to be fully understood. These new dimensions can only be addressed multilaterally by the United Nations and the other international institutions. The task ahead is not to reverse globalization, but to understand it better so that we can respond more efficiently and effectively. We are now in the midst of increasingly intense discussions as to how Governments should respond to the contagion of economic recession arising from chaos in the international financial system. The United Nations should not be left out of these discussions. My delegation appreciates that the Secretary-General is very sensitive to these developments. We will work with him and other Member States to ensure that the Organization can play a positive and meaningful role.

My delegation shares the view of the Secretary-General that international cooperation has a vital role to play in arresting and reversing the potentially harmful effects of human activities on the environment. Malaysia believes that dialogue with the private sector should be increased further in the joint endeavour to preserve and protect the environment. We are pleased with the industry dialogue with the private sector, started at the Commission on Sustainable Development's sixth session and now becoming a regular feature of the Commission.

I cannot conclude this statement without again making reference to the precarious financial health of the Organization, as I did at the last session. Obviously, there will be no transformation of the United Nations without the necessary financial or budgetary support of the Organization to carry out its multifaceted programmes and activities. My delegation views with deep concern the Secretary-General's reference to the further deteriorating financial situation of the United Nations. There is no running away from the fundamental issue. The major contributors have to pay their overdue contributions as soon as possible and without conditions. This and other related issues must be resolved as soon as possible if the "quiet revolution", as advocated by the Secretary-General, is to succeed.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to propose that the list of speakers for the debate on this item be closed at noon today.

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate on this item to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): Like previous speakers, I wish to start by expressing our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his personal presentation of the report on the work of the Organization before the opening of the general debate. We hope that this innovation, which we consider to be an integral element of the reform process, will be maintained and become a tradition.

Mr. Ortega Urbina (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In our view, the Secretary-General's report contains concise and thoughtful coverage of United Nations activities over the past year. It focuses our attention on a number of crucial questions with a direct relationship to the issue of the relevance of this world body to the requirements of the gradually emerging new era in international relations.

Addressing the continuing process of drastic and often unpredictable changes in today's complicated world, the report highlights the major characteristic of the human condition at the current stage of modern history. It is widely recognized that most of the changes going on are caused by the phenomenon of globalization. In this respect, the Secretary-General has accurately formulated the major, threefold challenge facing the international community at the turn of the new century and new millennium, which is

> "to understand better the emerging socio-economic forces and forms of globalization, to shape them to serve our needs and to respond effectively to their deleterious consequences". *(A/53/1, para. 15)*

My delegation cannot help reiterating the need for global responses to global challenges repeatedly stressed by the Secretary-General himself. It is the global institutions that are most suited to, and are expected to, provide these responses, and in the final analysis nobody

else except us can forge them. This very clear philosophy, shared by many other actors of contemporary international relations, has inspired my country, Ukraine, to take the position of an active and staunch supporter of a stronger, more efficient and more effective United Nations.

In this respect, we note with satisfaction that the report of the Secretary-General registers the first positive results of the "quiet revolution" of institutional reforms in this universal Organization that was initiated last year.

We feel especially proud that Ukraine's representative, who was honoured to preside over the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, made, as many delegations have concluded, a valuable contribution to promoting this very important process.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure the President that our delegation will offer him every support in his efforts to facilitate progress during the consideration of the remaining proposals which the Secretary-General outlined in his report (A/51/950), "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform".

From the experience of Ukraine's presidency of the General Assembly, we acquired firsthand knowledge of how difficult is the task of ensuring progress in reforming an institution where the interests of 185 sovereign States are to be reduced to a common denominator. However, we strongly advocate the need to move ahead along the road of change, since there is a predominant interest in this endeavour, which is to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to respond effectively to the requirements of a changing world.

In this respect, we look forward to the Secretary-General's report to the Millennium Assembly, wherein he intends to outline a new set of objectives and institutional means for the Organization as it moves into the new era.

The thematic overview of the work of the Organization, contained in the main part of the Secretary-General's report, embraces all the key areas in which the United Nations is mandated to conduct its activities. However, since there is always room for perfection, my delegation would like to make a number of remarks with regard to both the format and the contents of the report.

First, I would like to recall resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997, containing a number of concrete provisions designed to influence future versions of the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization. While some have been taken into account in the present report, we have to note that a number of other important measures have yet to be implemented.

Specifically, in accordance with that resolution, the report was supposed to contain a forward-looking section which "shall describe the specific goals for the Secretariat in the year ahead in the context of the work plan for the Organization in the coming year, taking into account the medium-term plan and the fact that the responsibility for establishing priorities rests with the Member States". Furthermore, it should have included "an analytical and concise annex elaborating the costs by major programmes and activities of all bodies of the United Nations system, located both in and outside New York, according to their mandates, so as to improve Member States' overview of system-wide issues". *(resolution 51/241, annex, paras. 6 and 9)*

The usefulness of these addenda is self-evident, and we expect them to be included in reports on the work of the Organization.

Our next observation deals with the contents of the first three parts of the report, covering United Nations activities in maintaining international peace and security, in the area of international cooperation for development and in the humanitarian field. We understand that it is very difficult to retain the short and concise format of the report, which we support very much, and at the same time to satisfy the requirement of presenting a complete record of the myriad activities the United Nations has undertaken.

However, it is regrettable that some of the important areas of the Organization's work were left outside the present report. For example, we find no reference to the programme activities related to solving the specific problems faced by the countries with economies in transition. Furthermore, the report does not cover the efforts of the United Nations in the field of overcoming the consequences of major technological disasters, including the Chernobyl catastrophe, the global dimensions and implications of which have been repeatedly recognized by the General Assembly.

I assume that other delegations may have their own examples of other omissions. It is our hope that the Secretariat will take note of our remarks and will take the necessary measures to avoid such omissions in the future.

By these remarks I do not wish to leave the impression that our delegation underestimates the excellent work done by the experts in the United Nations Secretariat who helped the Secretary-General to prepare his report for this session. We were motivated only by the conviction that constructive criticism would be in a reliable companion, promoting the spirit of reform reigning in the United Nations corridors.

I would like to conclude by again stressing our continued support for the Secretary-General's leadership in our common endeavour aimed at strengthening and revitalizing this world Organization, and to reiterate the resolve of Ukraine to contribute actively to these efforts.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): In his presentation of this year's report on the work of the Organization, Secretary-General Kofi Annan highlighted the need for the United Nations to rediscover the connection between peace and economic security by pointing out that if the poor lack development even the richest on this planet will not be safe. We agree entirely. Unfortunately, an international consensus capable of marshalling the required political and economic resources into a coherent programme for economic development and improved governance at the global level has yet to emerge.

At the same time, there are a certain encouraging signs that deserve to be acknowledged. The recently concluded general debate revealed a common aspiration to seek international solutions to our international problems.

The socio-economic forces unleashed by the still undisciplined phenomenon known as globalization have presented the international community with a new set of challenges. In order to spread its more beneficial effects to the greatest number, while minimizing its destructive byproducts, it will be necessary to take full advantage of the possibilities for joint analysis and cooperative action offered by the United Nations system. As the Secretary-General rightly reminds us, no other organization enjoys the scope and legitimacy of the United Nations. It is thus appropriate — and indeed desirable — that the United Nations should take up its responsibilities in this domain by exercising leadership in the context of current international efforts to prevent globalization from disrupting the stability of those who have worked hard to earn it, while ensuring that it leads to greater progress, prosperity and security for all.

Brazil is reassured by the determination demonstrated by the Secretary-General to address the various dimensions of globalization as he prepares the United Nations for a new era. By contrasting the stark economic realities in which the majority of humanity is forced to struggle with the fact that the past half-century has witnessed one of the longest periods of economic expansion in history, the Secretary-General's report carries a strong warning to all those who can still contemplate the growing gap between the wealthiest and the neediest without perceiving its potential for destabilization on a wide and worrisome scale.

We believe that the Secretary-General deserves credit for the series of concrete steps that he has been taking in order to modernize the United Nations. The institutional reforms he initiated have undoubtedly contributed to revitalizing the organizational machinery and improving accountability. It is now incumbent upon Member States to complete a process that should not be allowed to drag on into the new millennium. The very last paragraph of the Secretary-General's report carries an unambiguous — though carefully worded — message to this effect. It states

> "Reforming the United Nations institutional machinery is but a first step towards refashioning its roles for the new era." *(A/53/1, para. 236)*

The report concludes that the Millennium Assembly, which is to meet in less than two years, should concentrate on substantive issues.

It follows that Member States should not shun their obligation to deal with the necessary revision of those aspects of the Organization's reform that only we have the power to enact. As Minister Lampreia reminded the Assembly on 21 September:

> "For Brazil, reforming the United Nations necessarily implies updating the functioning and composition of the Security Council, which still mirrors a period of history that is now long gone" *(A/53/PV.7, p. 9)*.

There can be no justification for indefinitely prolonging discussions on this topic after five years of intensive, in-depth consideration of all its aspects. As the only universally recognized instrument of collective security, the Council is of particular importance to those among the overwhelming majority of United Nations Members that, like Brazil, are not parties to any military alliance. As we evolve towards a more markedly multipolar world, the Council's authority can, in principle, be exercised

more fully in conformity with the original design of the Charter, given the necessary political will. A strong and representative Security Council will likewise help to prevent the international order from degenerating again into more unstable balance of power schemes, with increasing rivalry for spheres of influence.

Furthermore, just as it becomes apparent that the seven major industrialized Powers will not find satisfactory answers to the financial problems of a globalized world economy without taking into consideration the points of view of the developing world, it is also clear that the present imbalances in the Security Council's composition, particularly in the permanent member category, constitute a handicap to effective United Nations responses to an international security agenda that deals predominantly with crises outside the developed world.

While remaining within the Secretary-General's unifying perspective of the relationship between peace and economic security, my delegation is pleased to note that a view long held by Brazil has been endorsed in paragraph 30 of the report, which highlights the need for a more dynamic interaction between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We wholeheartedly support the call for giving a new operational meaning to Article 65 of the Charter — described in that paragraph of the Secretary-General's report as a "dormant provision" — in order to better equip the United Nations to address the economic, social and humanitarian crises that threaten global security.

Many of the problems the Security Council has been grappling with, from dealing with mass flows of refugees to making sure war-torn societies do not again lapse into conflict, require an integrated approach that will satisfactorily harmonize a number of economic and social variables with security concerns. If peace, as the Secretary-General recalls, cannot be defined as mere absence of war but is also a function of social and economic well-being, it is only natural that a more coordinated approach to promote peace should be sought, with improved relations between the corresponding United Nations organs. We believe that the establishment of a humanitarian segment in the Economic and Social Council and the existence of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are good steps in that regard.

We must also express our satisfaction at the emphasis placed by the Secretary-General on the concept of diplomacy as a tool for replacing mistrust with confidence and reducing international threats to peace. The Secretary-General is correct in arguing that the role of diplomacy is sometimes overlooked. As the representative of a country that prides itself on its long diplomatic tradition, I can only welcome the fact that diplomacy with a capital "D" has acquired a committed advocate in Mr. Kofi Annan. His missions to Iraq and Nigeria, and his role in working towards a negotiated settlement of the Timorese question, stand among his most notable accomplishments in the past year — the accomplishments of a high-ranking international diplomat with an agenda exclusively dedicated to the advancement of peace.

One of the preceding speakers referred to the question of sanctions. The question of Security Council-imposed sanctions continues to be a matter of great concern, and we regret that the Security Council has not yet been able to respond to General Assembly resolution 51/242. Together with other members of the Council, we will continue to work towards a much-needed reassessment of this instrument, with a twofold preoccupation: first, to enhance the effectiveness of sanctions and secondly, to ensure that humanitarian and other non-intended effects of sanctions are minimized or eliminated.

Brazil has built up and lived by a culture of peace, as pointed out by the Secretary-General himself in his trip to Brasilia last July. We continue to believe that coercion can be contemplated only as a last resort, in extreme circumstances, and that, for United Nations Members, the use of force can be contemplated only in clear cases of self-defence or when collectively authorized by the Security Council. In today's world, a culture of peace requires respect for international law and a commitment to diplomacy and multilateralism even in the face of incomprehension by the mass media or at the risk of alienating certain segments of public opinion. The report on the work of the Organization provides us with the necessary reassurance that under the able leadership of Secretary-General, the United Nations remains not only our best hope for a worldwide culture of peace — one capable of reconciling peace with economic security — but also, as he eloquently puts it, a unique expression of our common humanity and an indispensable instrument for achieving common goals.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): We welcome the opportunity which this debate gives us to look back at some of the principal issues that were addressed over the past year and to measure how successfully we, the Member States, as well as the Organization as a whole, have tackled them.

In the first place, I want to extend our gratitude to the Secretary-General for the clarity and detail of his report and for having introduced it personally to the Assembly at the beginning of the session. He encouraged us to read it from cover to cover, which indeed we have done, for it reads easily and provides us with a succinct but perceptive analysis of some of the key issues which affect our work.

What I believe emerges clearly from the pages of the report is a description of a revitalized and increasingly energetic and relevant Organization which has a central role to play in the way that the international community of nations deals with a myriad of often interlinking issues. The enormous challenges which they pose to us as Member States and to the United Nations as an Organization are addressed clearly by the Secretary-General. It is our shared responsibility, through our activities at all levels in this house, to contribute to finding solutions to those global problems and at the same time to take action that will strengthen the effectiveness of the response of the Organization.

The Secretary-General describes as a "quiet revolution" the institutional reforms that he initiated last year. They have indeed brought about a greater unity of purpose and coherence of effort. We warmly congratulate him, the Deputy Secretary-General and the members of the Secretariat for the success they have brought to this important endeavour. Change in any large organization is never easy to accomplish, and in one as complex as this it can be especially hard. We recognize that patience must be exercised on the road forward, and we hope that when he reports to us next year, the benefits which will flow from a streamlined and more cohesive Secretariat will be visible to all.

The establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs has been a particularly welcome development, and under the direction of its highly distinguished Under-Secretary-General it has already undertaken some important work. The designation of this Department as a focal point for all United Nations action on small arms, together with the proposal for multisectoral and coordinated action on small arms, is both timely and welcome.

If the last session of the General Assembly can be described as the "Assembly of reform", the present session should not be remembered as the "Assembly of no reform". While we can be justifiably satisfied with what was achieved last year, we should not rest on our laurels.

The Secretary-General rightly reminds us in his report that a number of reform proposals remain to be approved. Among these are some to which my delegation attaches considerable importance, and we hope that with some further work it will be possible to reach consensus on them. The Development Account, for example, is a valuable concept which must be made to work. The Secretary-General has provided some useful clarifications which we hope will allow this issue to develop in a positive fashion for the benefit of developing countries.

The role which the United Nations can play in working for greater peace and security in today's world is addressed fully by the Secretary-General in his report. In his statement in the general debate, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland spoke of the need to address the root causes of conflict. The holistic concept of security which the United Nations is embracing serves to reinforce the correctness of this approach.

Extreme poverty and underdevelopment are given their proper place in the report's overview. They are the enemies of peace, and all too often they are the allies of instability, disorder and conflict. We must recognize these facts, just as we acknowledge that there can be no real security without development. Too many of today's conflicts stem from poverty caused by chronic underdevelopment, human rights abuse and political instability. The importance of good governance, respect for human rights and democratization are rightly emphasized by the Secretary-General, and these are all areas in which the United Nations can and should make a lasting contribution.

The report addresses the broad theme of globalization and offers some lucid insights into how the international community and the United Nations can engage it. The financial uncertainty in important regional financial markets around the world has, as the Secretary-General points out, exacted steep and possibly long-lasting social costs. It is still too early to say how these can be arrested and what steps can be taken to make globalization work for the betterment of mankind.

The adoption in July of the Statute of the International Criminal Court was a historic development. We share the Secretary-General's fervent hope that a large majority of Member States will have signed and ratified it by the end of the year 2000. I am pleased to say that Ireland will sign the Statute in two days' time in Rome.

The President returned to the Chair.

A central message of the report is the continuing importance of multilateral diplomacy in a world of rapid and often baffling change. It provides each of us, small and large, with a platform to explain and better understand. And it remains the best hope for the many still unheard voices to gain an audience. The year since the Secretary-General last reported on the work of the Organization has witnessed a number of challenges which only a multilateral body such as ours could have the authority to meet.

As we move towards the new millennium, the challenges we face will not, alas, grow less in number. However, we can take some comfort from the fact that we are beginning to make this Organization more responsive to the challenges and more effective and efficient in the way in which it handles them.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like at the outset to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the preparation and introduction of the report contained in document A/53/1.

From its very first lines, the report of the Secretary-General identifies the difficulties, the uncertainties and even the anxieties over the role that is performed by multilateral organizations in a rapidly and constantly changing international context.

We agree that the Millennium Assembly to be held in the year 2000 affords an exceptional opportunity for leaders from all parts of the world to consider the type of Organization that the new century demands. The Millennium Assembly should be carefully prepared through the intergovernmental process. That Assembly will make it possible to study thoroughly, among other issues, how the commitments undertaken in the United Nations conferences held in recent years are being carried out.

We have had only a short time to evaluate the results of the reforms sponsored by the Secretary-General and adopted by the General Assembly in its capacity as the foremost body of the United Nations. Nevertheless, we are fully confident that reforms will soon begin to surface in all areas of activity of the Organization.

The General Assembly will be considering the proposals made by the Secretary-General during this session, and my delegation is committed to participating in these deliberations in a constructive spirit. We will uphold the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter, the mandates given by the General Assembly and the need to provide the Organization with ways and means to better face the challenges of both the present and the future.

The initiative for the United Nations to enter into a mutually beneficial dialogue with the international business community is indeed very interesting. The idea deserves to be considered in depth by the General Assembly within the framework of the rules and procedures of the Organization.

We understand and share the concern of the Secretary-General on the need for the Organization to strengthen its initiative in the field of conflict prevention. This point is obvious, since Article 1 of the Charter states as a purpose of the United Nations the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and the suppression of acts of aggression.

In addition, the Charter clearly sets forth the functions and powers of each of the principal organs of the Organization. In accordance with Articles 10 and 11 of the Charter, the General Assembly may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the Charter and may make recommendations on such questions or matters. It may also consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, and it may discuss any matter in regard to these questions.

In accordance with Article 14, the General Assembly may recommend measures for the peaceful settlement of any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations, including situations resulting from a violation of the provisions of the Charter setting forth the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

For its part, in accordance with Article 24, the Security Council, specifically and exclusively, has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is necessary to improve the working relationship among the principal organs of the Organization, keeping, however, the allocation of functions and powers as contained in the Charter and bearing in mind the fundamental role it grants the General Assembly as the supreme body of the Organization.

We agree with the report's assessment that resolutions imposing binding sanctions should consider exemptions for humanitarian reasons and the effects on third States. Also pertinent are the calls made in this

regard by certain bodies entrusted with supervising human rights treaties with respect to the need for sanctions regimes to provide for concrete measures in order to protect the human rights of the most vulnerable groups.

The diagnosis of the world's economic and social situation and the data contained in the report are indeed dramatic, and they highlight the same realities that are clearly underlined by the recently published *Human Development Report*.

The fact that one fifth of mankind is forced to survive on only a dollar a day, that one third of all Africans are not expected to survive past the age of 40, that 40 per cent of women in developing countries are illiterate and that 50 per cent of South Asian children are underweight at the age of five contrasts dramatically with the economic expansion that has taken place during the second half of this century. It also contrasts with the fact that the volume of external aid to the developing countries has declined steadily throughout recent decades.

Here we see one of the greatest challenges to the international community in general, and to the United Nations in particular. Though it is true that the reforms of the Organization already implemented are positive and point in the right direction, the magnitude of the challenge requires that the Organization do much more than reform and streamline its functioning. It requires, in addition, the firm commitment and political will of the industrialized countries.

The United Nations is a capable tool for the States and the peoples of the world to take advantage of opportunities and to face the challenges posed by globalization. We agree with the Secretary-General's opinion that the economic, social and environmental dimensions of globalization, and, even more so, the so-called transnationalization of "uncivil" elements, require multilateral action by the United Nations and by other international institutions. Accordingly, we believe that public action should be supported, especially as regards globalization.

Finally, I wish to draw attention to the dramatic contrast existing between, on the one hand, the complexity of the challenges and the high expectations of world public opinion regarding the role that the Organization could play to face these challenges, and, on the other, the financial situation of the United Nations. The report of the Secretary-General informs us that the deficit in the regular budget and the unpaid assessments of some countries have been compounded by the fact that countries used to pay on time have stopped doing so.

If the critical financial situation is not overcome, it will be very difficult indeed for the Organization to carry out the work expected of it much less to set serious and ambitious targets for the next century.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Bangladesh is happy that this year the Secretary-General was given the opportunity, as he was last year for the first time in United Nations history, to introduce his report on the work of the Organization at the beginning of the general debate. This is a very welcome arrangement, and should continue to be followed. The membership should be made aware of this beforehand; we believe this procedure will make the general debate more focused and issues-driven, centring on those issues identified in the Secretary-General's report. Bangladesh also believes that in addition to recounting the activities of the previous year, the Secretary-General needs to identify in his report issues that have the potential to challenge the international community in the coming years and to ask world leaders to address those issues during the general debate. We would ask you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General to give serious thought to this suggestion. The references in this year's report to the Millennium Assembly and to pending reform issues and the proposal to convene global town meetings are ideas in that direction.

This year's report is very readable and presents in a user-friendly manner various mandated activities of the world body. Focus on substantive issues and issues of institutional reform is appropriately balanced and draws attention to the fact that both aspects require full and thorough consideration by us, the Member States, if we want the United Nations to succeed.

Bangladesh finds it comforting to be advised by the Secretary-General that "the United Nations family today acts with greater unity of purpose and coherence of effort than it did a year ago" (*A/53/1, para. 4*). We are happy to learn that the Secretary-General's quiet revolution of institutional reforms is bearing results and that new teamwork is leading the reform efforts in the Secretariat.

Bangladesh wants to commend the Secretary-General for giving good attention to dialogue with the international business community, drawing a parallel with the close working relationships the United Nations has with non-governmental organizations. We want this area of activity to be given increased attention in future reports, focusing on the involvement of the business

community in furthering the United Nations development agenda.

The assertion by the Secretary-General that "the role of diplomacy is so central to virtually all United Nations activities that its specific contribution is sometimes overlooked" (*para. 31*) is very perceptive and worthy of our full cognizance. The attention given to diplomacy in general, and to preventive diplomacy in particular, in paragraphs 31 to 42 of the report is very well deserved. In the area of disarmament, the Secretary-General has rightly highlighted the need "to curb the flow of small arms circulating in civil society" (*para. 50*) and advocates the holding of a United Nations conference on all aspects of the illicit arms trade in the near future.

The Secretary-General's advocacy of "smart sanctions" which seek to pressure regimes rather than peoples and which would thus reduce humanitarian costs will be supported by a majority of our membership, and we would ask the Secretary-General to sharpen the concept of targeted sanctions in his proposals to the Security Council and the General Assembly. In the area of post-conflict peace-building, the need to link all aspects — political, humanitarian, developmental and human rights — of external support for conflict-ridden countries has been underscored. We hope that in the next report the Secretary-General will present details of the new strategic framework concept for peace-building, as elaborated by the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

To Bangladesh, the development mandate of the United Nations has special significance, and we are satisfied that due attention has been given in the report to cooperating for development. Information on the activities of the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, though sketchy, is noteworthy, as this is first time that such information has been included in the report. In view of the wide-ranging implications of the work of the Development Group, the Secretary-General should devote greater space in his reports to its activities. He should also report on progress on work on development indicators undertaken by the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs.

In the section on poverty eradication, Bangladesh believes that the emerging role of microcredit, including the initiation of the $40 million dollar microstart programme of the United Nations Development Programme, should have found a place in the report. We would also like to see the situation in the least developed countries, including landlocked and small island developing countries, given a merited separate section in future reports, in view of the vulnerability of those countries in the globalization process.

Social development, in particular in recent years, has emerged as a critical area of the United Nations development agenda. A more analytical and well-structured section on this subject would be desirable in future. Elaboration on United Nations activities in the area of reproductive health is sadly absent in the report.

The Secretary-General has done well to draw the attention of the international community to the transnationalization of "uncivil" elements along with the emergence of a global civil society. This is an area which needs our concerted attention and action; it should continue to be addressed in the report as we discuss the situation in an increasingly interconnected world. We would also like the Secretary-General to include in his report activities relating to the right to development, in view of its centrality in the human rights regime.

Bangladesh is pleased that considerable attention has been given in the report to accountability and oversight. This should continue in future. United Nations monitoring of improvements in its operations and reforms requires close attention by Member States and should be reported upon regularly in a transparent manner. We are somewhat concerned about the 80 per cent implementation of mandated activities of the Organization. The Secretary-General considers that to be "largely positive" (*para. 222*). We would expect the implementation rate of all reform initiatives to further increase.

We started by commending the Secretary-General for his well-balanced report, and we also believe that our suggestions and ideas should receive needed consideration in the context of future reports.

Mr. Henze (Germany): I would like first of all to thank the Secretary-General and his associates for their timely report on the work of the Organization. They have presented us with a document that vividly depicts the complex and difficult problems that confronted the Organization over the past 12 months.

United Nations reform — that is the reform of all United Nations bodies — is a complicated and therefore at times slow process. But it is a process that is necessary to enable the Organization to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The report describes the Secretary-General's institutional reforms, which he has very much to the point called a "quiet revolution". Germany

welcomes these reforms as an important contribution towards revitalizing the United Nations. We believe that all Member States will eventually benefit from a reform of all the Organization's bodies. The measures which the Secretary-General has taken so far have already led to a tangible improvement of communication and procedures within the Secretariat.

Track one and track two reforms will allow the operational structures of United Nations funds and programmes to have a greater impact. We believe that the adoption of a funding strategy that seeks to combine results and resources in a multi-year funding framework is another significant step in the same direction. The United Nations must pursue this path with determination as well as a sense of urgency. There must be no erosion of the United Nations development role. We do not wish to see other players assume this role. We wish to see a vigorous United Nations and we therefore encourage the Secretary-General to continue and to expand his reforms.

We very much agree with the Secretary-General's analysis of globalization and its consequences, as well as with your assessment, Mr. President, of these phenomena, as made in your statement before the Assembly on 9 September. The present crises in the world show that we inescapably live in a global context. The United Nations is *par excellence* the institution that can deal with global questions. It is therefore incumbent upon the United Nations to respond to these challenges. Our common future can only be shaped through common efforts. These must include Governments, but also other entities such as non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations.

At the end of the twentieth century, too many of our world's people still suffer from poverty and unemployment. Germany therefore welcomes the efforts of the United Nations to arouse support for the 20/20 Initiative. The Initiative's proposals for the provision of basic social services like education, health care and shelter will be essential for future social development.

The world is not yet a fair place for all its inhabitants. Not everywhere are people put at the centre of development. It is unfortunately not everywhere that women are no longer exposed to discrimination. Three years after the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, and the World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, it is time to take stock and design future initiatives. Two special sessions of the General Assembly in the year 2000 will provide opportunities to reconfirm our commitment to implement the results of both conferences. These special sessions will also give us a chance to explore new territory. Globalization must be tamed so that it does not threaten socially and economically vulnerable groups. Globalization must be shaped so as to contribute to social development and economic returns for both men and women. These are issues the special sessions should consider attentively.

The turmoil in the world's financial markets demonstrates drastically how important it is for Governments and the relevant international institutions to take preventive action in time. The impact of the financial crisis which has spread from one region to another has already affected a large number of national economies. It shows that the world economy needs an improved framework. The measures discussed at the spring meeting of the Interim Committee of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are indispensable in order to prevent future crises. But we have to think even further. We have to broach the question of whether and how multilaterally agreed interventions could become necessary and useful. Such interventions would surely be more appropriate than unilateral protective measures.

We need better early-warning devices, more transparency and more efficiency in banking systems, especially, but not only, in the newly emerging economies. Again, this is not a task for Governments alone. We need a global partnership between public and private institutions; a partnership between Governments, international financial organizations and corporations. And, furthermore, as the Secretary-General put it in his report, "a bridge must be constructed between ... the Dow Jones index and the human development index". *(A/53/1, para. 15)*

The adoption of the Statute of the International Criminal Court marked a major step forward towards a world order in which the force of law and not the law of force prevails. Perpetrators of the most heinous crimes will no longer go unpunished. Germany will continue to vigorously support the establishment of the International Court. Let me assure the Assembly that my country is working wholeheartedly for the early entry into force of the Rome Statute. Germany intends to sign the Statute before the fiftieth anniversary of the Genocide Convention in December 1998. We will encourage all countries to sign and ratify the Statute as soon as possible. We will actively cooperate in drafting a resolution to that effect during this session. We look forward to participating actively in next year's work of the Preparatory Commission.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has declared the twenty-first century a century of prevention. As I have already pointed out in my remarks on the state of the world's financial system, he has done so with good reason. Trouble must be nipped in the bud. This is the task of preventive diplomacy, of human rights observers and of peacekeeping forces. We must prevent large numbers of people from having to flee their countries or leave them in search of employment. To strike at the root of mass migration means eliminating their economic, ecological and social causes. The gap between rich and poor grows wider, and this gap must no longer be allowed to grow. It must be closed. All nations must be given a fair chance in global competition. Hence richer countries must help those that are poorer to make the most of their opportunities for development.

Africa shows what can be achieved when the international community and the countries that experience problems join hands. Today democratic elections are held in more than half of the African countries. In 20 African countries economic growth is between 4 per cent and 6 per cent; in 11 it is even higher. However, old and new conflicts in Africa — particularly the continuing violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the unresolved conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the increasing tension in Angola — continue to be a source of serious concern. We commend the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, his representatives and their teams in bringing about peaceful solutions.

I would like to stress our particular appreciation for those sections of the report that analyse the causes of conflict in Africa and contain proposals for the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. During the recent meeting between the Secretary-General and representatives of donor countries we have pledged our full support for his proposals. We will continue to actively cooperate with the African nations, keeping in mind the intrinsic link between peace and development.

With the new millennium ahead, we must act together to shape our future. A reformed and strengthened United Nations will play a paramount role in the fulfilment of the task that lies ahead.

Ms. Wensley (Australia): Australia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General. We believe that this is an excellent report which identifies the substantial challenges the Organization is facing as we prepare ourselves for the new millennium.

I want to concentrate on two of the challenges only that the Secretary-General has identified: United Nations reform and the impact of globalization.

On the issue of United Nations reform, we applaud the considerable progress made by the Secretariat over the last year under the astute and thoughtful leadership of the Secretary-General. Much has been done, but more, obviously, remains to be done.

Our position in support of ongoing reform is very well known. In the jargon of management consultants, it is a process of continuous improvement. We thought that the Deputy Secretary-General captured the thought very well in a recent comment when she described the reform process that the Secretariat is undergoing as "the pursuit of excellence".

One thing that is very important to us and that we hope to see is the ongoing reform objectives identified and brought together in a clear programme of track three activities.

The Secretary-General's report highlights the Millennium Assembly as an opportunity to look ahead at the kind of Organization that we will need in the twenty-first century. We very much look forward to receiving his report on this issue. We support strongly the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his address during the general debate that if we are to capitalize on this opportunity, we need to identify a practical, achievable programme of action. It would be very much a lost opportunity if all that eventuated was an elaborate consultative process and a costly ceremonial exercise.

One critical reform issue that my Government certainly would like to see resolved before the new millennium is that of reform of the Security Council. Unless we can proceed with this, this Organization will not be able to claim that it has adapted successfully to the world in which we live today. My delegation looks forward to debating those issues and that subject in much more detail under later agenda items.

The second major challenge facing the United Nations which I wish to address is that of globalization. The Secretary-General's report and the prominence of the issue in the general debate clearly underline the significance of this issue for the United Nations. Renewed international cooperation is needed to examine the functioning in particular of the international financial architecture, a process that is under way this week in

Washington and in which Australia is very pleased to be participating.

In dealing with the impact of globalization and to ensure we can take advantage of its benefits and opportunities, the very first responsibility, of course, rests with each and every one of us to ensure that we have in place the appropriate domestic policies and mechanisms, including prudent corporate governance and efficient and transparent financial sectors.

International cooperation has a valuable role to play in helping countries address deficiencies in these areas, and it is important to recall that a number of initiatives are already very well established. Technical assistance programmes are helping to develop, strengthen and reform existing mechanisms and institutional frameworks in developing countries so they can better exploit the opportunities globalization has to offer.

My Government has been very closely involved in a number of such programmes at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. In the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APEC), we are leading efforts to strengthen the capacities of our regional partners, including particularly in this area of corporate governance.

At the multilateral level, the efforts of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in responding to the difficulties faced most recently by Thailand, Indonesia and Korea underline its key role. We are very pleased to have made a major contribution to each of those assistance packages. In the case of the Indonesian package, we worked particularly hard to ensure that greater recognition was given to understanding and managing the social impact of the economic reforms that were being introduced, something that my colleague from Bangladesh has just underlined and something that I think the United Nations would do well in particular to focus on.

The IMF itself has acknowledged that it has learned from its experience in responding to the economic crisis in East Asia. While the affected economies proceed with implementing structural reforms which will provide a stronger foundation for future economic growth, there has also emerged a recognition of the importance of strengthening the existing international financial architecture.

I think it is important that in examining ways to do this and asking ourselves what is it that the United Nations can and should do, it is vitally important that the commitment to strengthening the international trading system does not wane. Countries need to work together bilaterally, regionally and through the World Trade Organization (WTO) to ensure that the momentum towards further liberalization of the international trading system is maintained.

Cooperation and partnership at the international level can do a good deal to promote global best practice in financial systems, improve transparency and strengthen national capacities. Considerable effort is already under way in a number of forums in and around the Bretton Woods institutions — not least the discussions to which I referred, which are taking place in Washington this week.

The United Nations, we believe, has an important role in the broader discussion of globalization, working with rather than attempting to duplicate the role of other international agencies and forums. We need always to consider where expertise lies and how the United Nations can add value. In this connection, the United Nations development agencies have a very important place in assisting the developing countries themselves address the social implications of recent economic difficulties. There is scope, we believe, to redirect some resources to address the adverse social implications of economic volatility in a number of vulnerable countries — indeed, it is good to note that some agencies have already made progress in this regard.

The recent high-level dialogue on globalization was an invaluable opportunity for countries to share their experiences and exchange views on how international cooperation can assist. We felt very encouraged by this debate. We thought it was remarkably free of some of the polemic that characterizes North-South exchanges in this House. We felt very appreciative to all those who were involved, and we look forward to that spirit prevailing as we continue to debate globalization throughout this session of the General Assembly.

My delegation generally looks forward to contributing to the ongoing discussion of this important issue of globalization and with the other challenges which the Secretary-General has identified in the report that we are considering in this first substantive plenary meeting of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): First of all, the Mongolian delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting a concise but comprehensive report on the work of the Organization and on a partnership for global community. Like the previous one,

this year's report highlights the most significant aspects of the United Nations activities and points out the immediate and long-term tasks facing the Organization. The report is thought-provoking and addresses many of the challenges that lie ahead for the international community.

The fact that this item is being considered immediately after the general debate is in itself significant. This provides representatives the opportunity to look back at the work of this Organization — in fact, at the collective work of the Member States and the Secretariat — in a broad context, instead of just examining one or another aspect of United Nations activities. In today's context, such a debate provides the opportunity to view United Nations activities through the prism of the ongoing "quiet revolution", looking towards its further improvement as an indispensable instrument for the cooperation of States in the next millennium.

We believe that the report is balanced; it is analytical and provides reference material. It shows what has been achieved during the past year and what still needs to be done. Therefore, we welcome the report as a good basis for our debate.

Since my delegation will have the opportunity to comment on specific aspects of the report when agenda items are discussed here in the plenary and in the Main Committees, at this stage I would like to touch upon the following few questions.

With regard to United Nations reform, since we all agree that the reform is a process and not an event, it cannot be achieved overnight. My delegation believes that during its fifty-second session the General Assembly was able to do a great deal of work, as reflected in the report. However, during the current session we still need to address the pending issues concerning the sunset provisions, the question of adopting a results-based budget system, the terms for establishing the Development Account and some others. However, we believe that the success of the reform of the Organization could be judged, in the final analysis, on the basis of real improvements in responding to the urgent and vital challenges that lie ahead and the impact on the lives of ordinary peoples. Accordingly, we believe that the reform should focus on strengthening the role of the Organization in the promotion of development. The role of the General Assembly as the main deliberative and decision-making organ of the United Nations, in which all Member States participate equally, should be enhanced in accordance, of course, with the United Nations Charter.

No reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. In this respect my delegation welcomes the steps taken by the Security Council in response to General Assembly resolutions, especially with respect to its working procedures and transparency. This work should be continued. Though the Open-ended Working Group has made some progress, especially with respect to cluster II issues, no progress, unfortunately, has been made on the cluster I issues, especially on the expansion of the Security Council and curtailing the veto malpractice. These questions should be addressed squarely if we are to enter the next millennium with a more effective and efficient United Nations.

My delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that the Millennium Assembly, expected to be held in September 2000, should be used as a unique opportunity to define clearly what kind of United Nations the international community envisions and would support in the new century. The preparatory work for the Millennium Assembly should start as soon as possible so as to enable the Member States not only to elaborate their common strategic vision of the world and the role of the United Nations in it, but also to identify as clearly as possible the ways and means of achieving these ends. Without the latter, the noble aims and strategic vision risk remaining an unfulfilled aspiration.

The section on peace and security clearly demonstrates that the United Nations is called upon to play a very important role in prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building — and indeed, it can do so. In this respect, my delegation would like to underline the positive role that the Secretary-General played in defusing the tension in the Persian Gulf area last February, although, as he has underlined in his report,

> "Unfortunately, the situation in Iraq still appears to be far from resolution." *(A/53/1, para. 24)*

Turning to the part on disarmament, my delegation would like to underline its support for the efforts of the international community to further promote the cause of nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we support the eight-nation declaration on creating a nuclear-weapon-free world as an important step in the wake of the troubling nuclear-weapon tests in South Asia. It is in this context that Mongolia welcomes the declaration of the People's Republic of China not to resume nuclear tests and expresses the hope that the latest encouraging signs from South Asia will be followed up with concrete actions that would lead to strengthening the non-proliferation regime

and move us closer to nuclear disarmament. We believe that the two ad hoc committees established in the Conference on Disarmament could be instrumental in increasing the security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States and in banning the production of fissile material for nuclear-explosive devices.

When it comes to the question of international security, every nation, big and small alike, can and should make its contributions. As a Member of the United Nations, Mongolia is striving to make its contribution in promoting confidence and the goals of disarmament. Thus Mongolia recently published its white book on defence, sent its reply to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and took steps to participate in peacekeeping activities. Moreover, having declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone, it is now actively working to institutionalize its nuclear-weapon-free status, which would make its territory an area of peace, stability and predictability. In 1999, Mongolia, together with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, will host an international conference in Mongolia to focus on the pressing disarmament and other security-related issues of the region.

Turning to the sections of the report on cooperation for development and globalization, my delegation would like to underline the enormous work being carried out by the United Nations Development Group, as well as its support for the creation of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, which, as the Secretary-General points out, permit a new strategic approach to the implementation of goals agreed to at United Nations global conferences and of national development priorities. Likewise, we commend the efforts of the United Nations, especially the United Nations Development Programme and the World Food Programme, in combating poverty.

One of the factors, or should I say handicaps, that negatively affects the development of some 30 developing countries is lack of access to the sea due to their geographical location. This has been recognized by the international community, and some concrete steps are being taken by the United Nations to address this and related issues. It would have been very useful if the report had shed some light on the steps taken in this field within the United Nations system.

Turning to the section on strengthening the international legal order, my delegation would like to underline the importance of the outcome of the Rome Conference, especially the adoption and signature by many States of the Statute of the International Criminal Court. We fully agree with the Secretary-General that

> "Although many would have preferred the Court to have been vested with more far-reaching powers, one should not minimize the breakthrough that was achieved." *(A/53/1, para. 181)*

The Court's general jurisdiction over such crimes as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression should be strengthened further during the subsequent work in the preparatory commission that is to be established soon.

Finally, in the view of my delegation, the report should have focused more extensively on the question of combating international terrorism and on the ways and means to enhance international cooperation in this field. We hope that these comments and observations will be taken into account by the Secretary-General in his activities and reflected in the next report.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The key points of the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization reaffirm convincingly that the United Nations, being the sole universal international Organization — better equipped than any other world body to formulate agreed approaches and to resolve conflict situations — can provide appropriate responses to the global challenges faced by the international community at the turn of the millennium.

It is from this standpoint that the Russian Federation is evaluating the United Nations reforms launched by the Secretary-General, intended, as we see it, to rationally adapt United Nations mechanisms to today's needs. We support the carrying out of reforms that will promote effective consolidation of the entire Organization and help improve its efficiency in addressing urgent global challenges.

We share the ideas expressed by the Secretary-General on the increasing importance of preventive diplomacy. The international community has developed a unique arsenal of political and diplomatic tools which should be used to resolve every international issue. This arsenal must be put to effective use.

The fact that the Iraqi crisis earlier this year was settled precisely by political means, through the joint efforts of many States, and through the initiatives launched by the Secretary-General, provided graphic

evidence that constructive and active diplomacy can be far more efficient than exclusive reliance on military force.

The Secretary-General's proposals on stepped-up cooperation between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — including through the invigoration of Article 65 of the Charter, dealing with cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council — as well as on cooperation between the United Nations and Member States in the area of preventive diplomacy, merit support.

Peacekeeping operations remain a key instrument for resolving conflicts and crisis situations after all means of preventive diplomacy have been exhausted. We believe that the main principles and criteria governing peacekeeping operations should include the existence of an actual threat to international or regional peace and security and a guarantee that the Security Council will play a key part in settling all political issues relating to operations, first and foremost, issues relating to the possible use of military force.

We call for the further consolidation of interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations in peacekeeping activities, in conformity with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. At the same time, promotion of such cooperation should not serve to undermine the key role of the United Nations in that highly important area. We deem it necessary to continue to develop a concept of post-conflict peace-building. Development of parameters and practical guidelines for the rehabilitation of societies destroyed by wars could give impetus to such a concept.

Sanctions as an instrument of international enforcement require a highly balanced approach. We fully share this point of view with the Secretary-General. When introduced by the Security Council, sanctions should not become a tool to fight a regime simply because it is disliked. It is necessary to have clarity of goals every time sanctions are introduced and to agree well in advance upon clearly defined conditions and mechanisms for their lifting and possible gradual easing. Sanctions should not make people suffer. They should not destabilize the economic situation either in a country subject to them or in the surrounding region.

We welcome the attempt made by the Secretary-General to define the United Nations role in addressing social and economic problems related to the current phase of globalization and its consequences, both positive and negative. Nowadays, it is clear to everybody that we cannot rely exclusively on market elements. There is a need for adequate mechanisms that would reasonably regulate financial and economic processes at a national and international level.

We welcome the fact that the United Nations has taken the lead over the last year in outlining approaches to resolving arising problems in the following ways: a high-level meeting held by the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions within the framework of the Economic and Social Council; a dialogue between Government officials, members of the business community and representatives of civil society on the role played by industry in ensuring sustainable development, as was first initiated within the framework of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD); and high-level meetings held in order to resume a dialogue on international economic cooperation for development through partnership.

The closer we get to the Millennium Assembly, the more pressing becomes the issue of formulating the key topics that the Assembly will discuss. It is obvious that under conditions of a new phase of the global financial crisis, that forum must focus on how to work out the ways of overcoming the consequences of the crisis and preventing new setbacks.

Among our main priorities is human rights, which should become a unifying source for international cooperation based on equal rights. The formation of such cooperation in the interest of security, democracy and development depends on the ability and readiness of the international community to overcome double standards, considerations of political expediency and selective approaches. The sooner such approaches are implemented, the faster we will manage to dispel the illusion, mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, that the interests of the majority can be served by violating the rights of the minority. The international community should not put up with the fact that nowadays those dangerous illusions serve as a basis for State policies in some parts of the world.

We are concerned that, due to the lack of financial resources, according to the report's conclusion, some vital operations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will have to be scaled down or even, in some cases, suspended. For Russia, as well as for other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, the humanitarian imperative is to implement accurately and consistently the decisions of the Geneva regional conference on addressing the problems of refugees in the former of the

republics of the Soviet Union. We believe that not only the Geneva conference itself but also its follow-up activities should set an example of international cooperation to resolve acute humanitarian problems.

We fully share the thesis contained in the report that the international order must be based on international law. This is fully concordant with the pivotal idea of the need for "invoking the force of law rather than the law of force" *(A/53/PV.9)*, as expressed by Mr. Igor S. Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia to the General Assembly at this session's general debate. The finalization of the Statute of the International Criminal Court Statute is a considerable step in that direction.

We support the further intensification of collective efforts under the aegis of the United Nations, as the Secretary-General rightly recommends in his report, to counteract the transnationalization of uncivil elements of society — first and foremost, illegal drugs, organized crime and terrorism. Maximum efforts must be made to implement relevant decisions adopted at the special session of the General Assembly in order to stand up to the drugs threat. We hope that at the present session the General Assembly will manage to adopt the draft international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism, introduced by our country. The constructive progress of work on the draft convention against organized transnational crime also gives rise to optimism.

We note with satisfaction that the introduction of institutional reforms in the United Nations system's activities has been successfully initiated. We believe that the consistent and pragmatic implementation of the entire set of reforms launched by the Secretary-General will further increase the efficiency of the Organization's work, particularly of its Secretariat, the working structure that plays an important role in the everyday, practical activities of the United Nations.

In this regard, the Russian delegation counts on a fruitful and detailed exchange of views at this session on the whole array of issues related to the reform of the Organization's personnel policy, which has long been overdue.

In conclusion, we wish once again to voice concern, clearly enunciated by the Secretary-General, over the United Nations financial situation. The perpetuation of the Organization's overly protracted financial crisis not only threatens the implementation of current mandates and programmes approved by all Member States, but also undermines the role and authority of the Organization in the international arena.

In general, the Secretary-General's report clearly shows that our Organization has the potential and machinery necessary to continue playing its unique role in coordinating the joint efforts of Member States to strengthen peace and security, meet the new challenges to humanity at the turn of the millennium, and advance towards the new horizons of multilateral cooperation.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): At the outset, allow me to convey the Chinese delegation's gratitude to the Secretary-General for the annual report he has prepared on the work of the Organization. The Chinese delegation has read the report from cover to cover. I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for the untiring efforts he has made in the past year in carrying out the tasks this Organization has entrusted to him and in enhancing the role of the United Nations. We also appreciate the important role he played in the crisis early this year surrounding the inspection of Iraqi weapons, in the facilitation of the settlement of regional conflicts in Africa, in the promotion of the reform of the United Nations system and in many other fields.

The international situation, generally speaking, has remained stable over the past year, but new regional conflicts have surfaced frequently. The Secretary-General points out in his report that new challenges have continuously emerged in the political, economic, financial, security and other fields. We believe that peace and development, the two major themes of today's world, should be the central tasks of the work of the United Nations.

Over the past year, the United Nations has continued to play an active role in maintaining world peace and security. While committed to the resolution of conflicts, the Organization has also paid much attention to exploring and resolving their root causes. A good case in point in this connection were the two Security Council meetings at the level of Foreign Minister on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Progress has also been made in the disarmament field.

Very disturbingly, however, the nuclear tests this year and the regional arms race in South Asia have posed serious challenges to the peace and security of that region and the world at large. We fully endorse the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report that the

United Nations should continue to work, together with the international community, to facilitate the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, safeguard the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and maintain the peace, security and stability of South Asia and the world as a whole.

Although developing countries have emphasized time and again that the question of development should be top priority, it worries us to see that the core resources for United Nations operational activities are decreasing. As the Secretary-General points out in his report, official development assistance around the globe has dropped to an all-time low, now standing at only 0.22 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries and a mere 0.19 per cent for the seven most developed. We cannot help but be concerned at this development. We hope that all developed countries will show their due sense of responsibility on the question of financing, implement the relevant General Assembly resolutions in real earnest, and reach the agreed targets on the issue of voluntary contributions as soon as possible.

The elimination of poverty is a major task facing most developing countries. We appreciate the fact that institutions within the United Nations system have made the elimination of poverty a shared goal for inter-institutional coordination. The efforts of the United Nations in helping the developing countries to achieve sustainable development are also commendable. In the new circumstances, the United Nations should work even harder to solve the problems facing developing countries, especially in the fields of boosting investment and growth, addressing the challenges of globalization, making the necessary readjustments and avoiding the eruption of economic and social crises. All these efforts can, as a matter of fact, be called the preventive diplomacy that we often talk about. They can also help eradicate the root cause of regional conflicts.

Over the past year, the United Nations has also made progress in the field of human rights. The Chinese Government has actively supported and participated in the United Nations activities in this field and is gradually accelerating the process of improving its democracy and rule of law. Not long ago, Mrs. Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, paid a successful visit to China. She is satisfied with the progress China has made in the area of human rights and grateful for China's support for the United Nations work in this field. In October last year, China signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This morning, China signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This demonstrates the Chinese Government's important support for the United Nations work in human rights.

The financial crisis of the United Nations is yet another urgent matter that warrants our concern. It has deteriorated further over the past year. This problem has not only seriously affected the daily operations of the United Nations, but also hindered the deepening of its reform. The definitive solution is for the major contributor in particular to move quickly to pay its arrears, in full and without condition. No State Member of the United Nations has any excuse to shirk from its responsibilities to the Organization.

The times demand and the general membership of the Organization as a whole aspires to the reasonable and appropriate reform of the United Nations. Over the past year, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions endorsing the Secretary-General's reform measures in the Secretariat and has accepted some of his proposals for reforming the United Nations system. However, as was pointed out by the Secretary-General himself, the adoption of these resolutions is not the end of the reform process, but rather the starting point for Member States to explore the direction of the reform of the United Nations. This session of the General Assembly will, on the one hand, closely follow the implementation of the reform measures already adopted and, on the other, continue to consider some long-term reform proposals put forward by the Secretary-General. The Chinese delegation hopes that an earnest and thorough study of the proposals will be conducted on the basis of open and wide-ranging discussions.

The United Nations has made an extraordinary journey over more than half a century. As the most important intergovernmental organization in the world, it has unique and indispensable roles on the international political and economic scenes. The Chinese delegation hopes that the debate on the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization will help Member States better to summarize the lessons and experiences of that work further to improve the Organization's efficiency and define its major tasks, so that it can enter the twenty-first century with a new look and make new contributions to the maintenance of peace and the promotion of development.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.